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THEY MAY BE DOWN--
--BUT DON'T EVER COUNT THEM OUT!
The Graphic Mystery by Don McGregor and Gene Colan

The PENUMBRA

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MAN OF WAR no. 2
Chicago is struck by a rash of street-walker murders, and all clues point to our hero!

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU: You're the ones who buy these books, and here is a sampling of who you are!:

MATTHEW BENNETT: "I live in Sutton Coldfield (that's just outside Brum) and I'm going to start Secondary School soon (that's high school to you Yanks). My favourite Eclipses are *Miracleman* and *Airboy*. I'm 11 years old."

MICHAEL NEVIASER, Vienna, Virginia: "I'm Director of Investment Strategies for a stock brokerage outfit, and aiming to be the first stockbroker on the moon (I'm only 33). I love the letters pages in *Scout* and *Airboy* 'cause folks get so cranked off. Please bring back *Aztec Ace*."

J. P. THILL, Rickreall, Oregon: "I'm a commercial fisherman during the summer and a theater student the rest of the year."

JERRY SMITH, Morristown, Tennessee: "I work at Lear Seigler, making car seats. Actually, I repair everyone else's messes. We're U.A.W., and the pay's great, so I'm happy. Been married for nine months now and no children on the way. (Surprise, everyone!)"

LARRY TOWSLEY, Raleigh, North Carolina: "I am a 14-year-old, in high school, ninth grader. Someday I would like to own my own comic shop."

IAN M. McLAUGHLIN, Birmingham, England: "I am nobody special, just a normal, middle-classed, unemployed person with a love for art, music, comics and movies."

JERRY AMOUN, Hershey Park, Pennsylvania: "I'm 25 and semi-unemployable. I sometimes work in Manhattan, tho, putting office cubicles together — mod furn mazes for the rat racers — it keeps me in cigarettes (Camels) and coffee (Nicaraguan Sandinista). I'm an exact time/tune freak; my quartz Mickey Mouse watch and my 1915 Washburn guitar keep me pretty busy. I have every Eclipse comic that I could possibly lay my hands on."

S. RUTH JONES, Whitmore Lake, Michigan: "I only read *Scout* and *Fashion in Action*, but I'll tell you what I do anyway. I'm a bindery worker for the University of Michigan, though I don't intend to make a career of it! I also do a little graphic art freelancing — a logo here, a masthead there. . . "

PETER EVANS, Chicago, Illinois: "I'm a freshman at the University of Chicago, interested greatly in the humanities and classics, with grand visions of archeology. I'm not 19, 5'11", and I am definitely not looking for just a down-right good time. I like *Scout*. I would like to take this opportunity to say 'hey, there' to Sean Ebbert (what a guy!) at WMU and the same to Andy Sinclair, that swingin' guy at CMU who warned me about what's her face. Oh, ok, you too, mom."

SHEREE PRICE, Fort Sumter, South Carolina: "Occupation: Housewife, trying like hell to write in my spare time. Age: 28. My husband (Dewey) is a Marine on recruiting duty in Sumter right now. (Usually he's into computers.) We have a two and a half year old daughter (Shannon). Dewey's crazy about Indians, and if he and Tim Truman ever get together at a convention, I'll kill them both. We both agree that the M-16 is a piece of . . . well, you get the idea. The M-14 doesn't jam as much and has a better performance record. Dewey and I both loved *The Sisterhood of Steel* and are anxiously awaiting its rebirth."

catherine yronwode

DETECTIVES, INC.™: A Terror of Dying Dreams no. 2, September 1987. Published monthly by Eclipse Comics, P.O. Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436. Catherine Yronwode, Editor-in-Chief. Dean Mullaney, Editor and Publisher. Story ©1987 Don McGregor. Art ©1987 Gene Colan. Cover art ©1987 Gene Colan/Steve Leialoha. Detectives, Inc. TM Don McGregor. All other material ©1987 Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved. The stories, characters and events in this magazine are fictional. Film by SM Graphics. For licensing information contact Dean Mullaney.

Doug Burnett strolls jauntily along the crowded sidewalks of Brighton Beach. There is nothing furtive about his movements. He twirls a bottle of expensive champagne, whistles like one of the Seven Dwarfs, unaware there are any witches lurking about.

They are approaching the Russian and Polish sector of the Boardwalk, Denning realizes. He can already hear the Atlantic breaking on the shore, with a slap as cold as the hand of an icy lover.

Somewhere closer, probably from one of the dilapidated men's clubs, comes a blast of music popular in the old country, a tune almost as insistent and demanding as the Russian and Polish voices raised in furious debate, arguing some philosophical point made more eloquent by liberal drinks of vodka or ouzo.

Once Burnett reaches his destination, a large apartment complex off the Boardwalk promenade, Denning and Rainier discuss strategy.

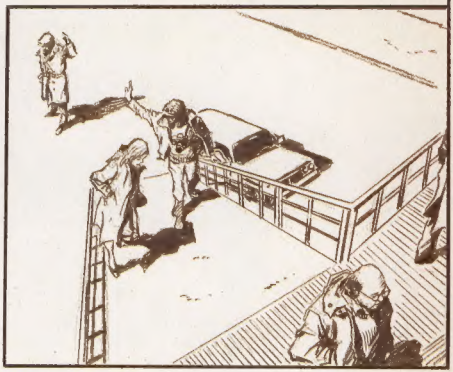
Wait the quarry out...

Hope he will exit with whomever he is meeting...

Hope they can shoot some revealing candids of the fledgling Wall Street exec...

Best hope is that they can catch Burnett in some display of extramarital passion. The best hope is lousy, but it's one they have to live with.

Denning has an early evening date with Vera Lawrence and departs, anticipation lighting his eyes. Ernest promises to return and take over the vigil if Burnett has not reappeared by ten that night. Rainier and Dierdre climb the ramp to the splintery wooden slats of the Boardwalk, looking for a vantage point where they can wait Burnett out.



Elderly women parade their furs, their docile husbands trailing in their wake. Exercise freaks do calisthenics in the cold spray of the surf.

The wind off the ocean turns chillier. The sun sets in swirls of color over the abandoned desolation of the old Coney Island parachute jump.

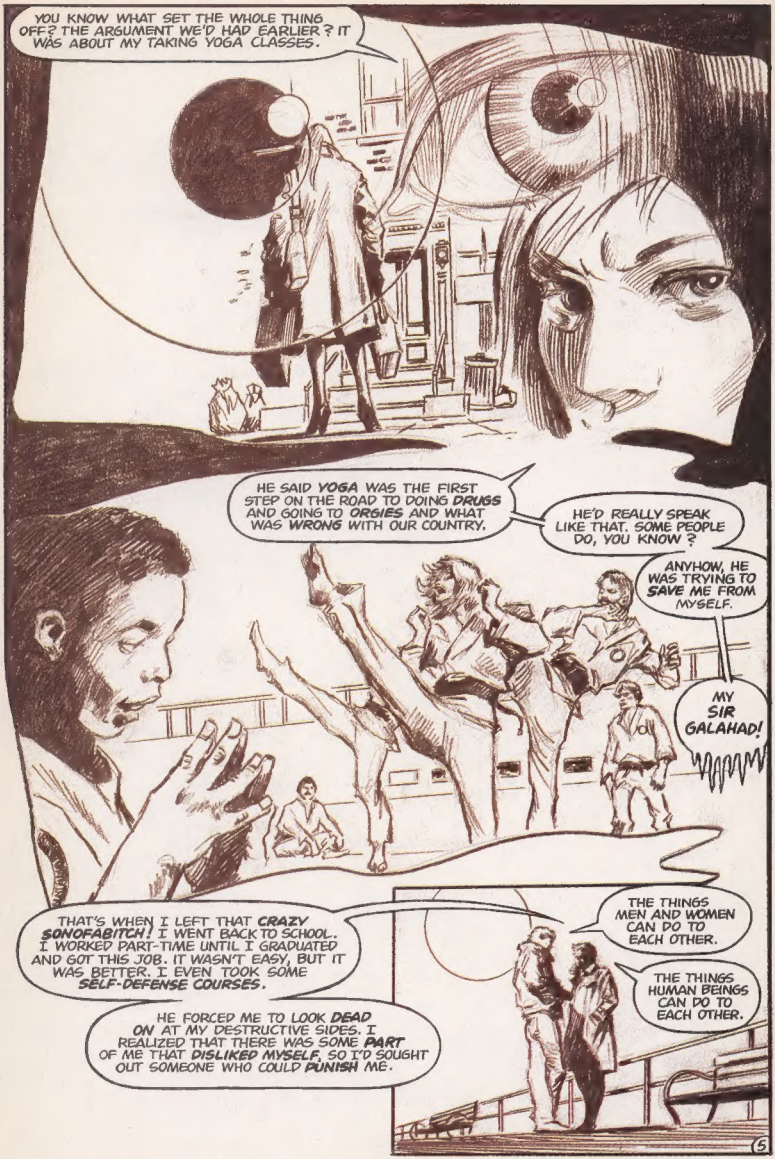
The work force returns home. Darkness settles in. The music stops. The men's club closes its doors, the debates finished until the morrow.

Rainier hates surveillance. It is a long and uncomfortable time trying to stay alert. He buys them knishes; long ago, the knish replaced the hot dog in this area.

"Nathan's Famous Hot Dogs" is up near the blocks of desolation. Down here they don't know from Nathan's.

DURING THE LONG HOURS, RAINIER AND DIERDRE TALK. AT FIRST ABOUT TRIVIAL MATTERS, THEN ABOUT MORE PERSONAL DISCLOSURES.
YOU REALLY WANT TO GET THIS GUY, DON'T YOU?
IT'S NOT JUST FOR LEILA.
IT'S AS IF YOU'RE TRYING TO EVEN SOME OLD SCORE.
THAT NIGHT IN LEILA'S HOUSE... WHEN HE SLUGGED ME... IT BROUGHT IT ALL BACK.
BROUGHT WHAT ALL BACK?
I LIVED WITH A MAN FOR A WHILE. HIS NAME WAS HOLLIS.
HE HAD A GOOD JOB. HE WAS A GOOD LOOKING GUY. WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK FOR?
EXCEPT HE WAS AN ALCOHOLIC. OH, HE HAD HIS REASONS, BUT IT DIDN'T CHANGE WHAT I WAS LIVING THROUGH. HE... HOLLIS CAME IN LATE ONE NIGHT... DRUNK.
WE HAD AN ARGUMENT IN THE AFTERNOON. WE'D EACH SAID SOME PRETTY TERRIBLE THINGS TO EACH OTHER.
ANYHOW, I WAS ASLEEP WHEN HE RETURNED.
I WOKE UP TO HIM DRAGGING ME OUT OF BED.
HE WAS YELLING AT ME. MOSTLY CURSES. AT LEAST THOSE WERE THE WORDS THAT HAD THE EMPHASIS.
AND HE BEGAN HITTING ME WITH A BELT, IN TIME WITH EACH CURSE... IT WAS LIKE A CRAZY, BRUTAL POEM...
YOU BITCH, SLAP!
YOU BALL-BREAKER,
SLAP
3

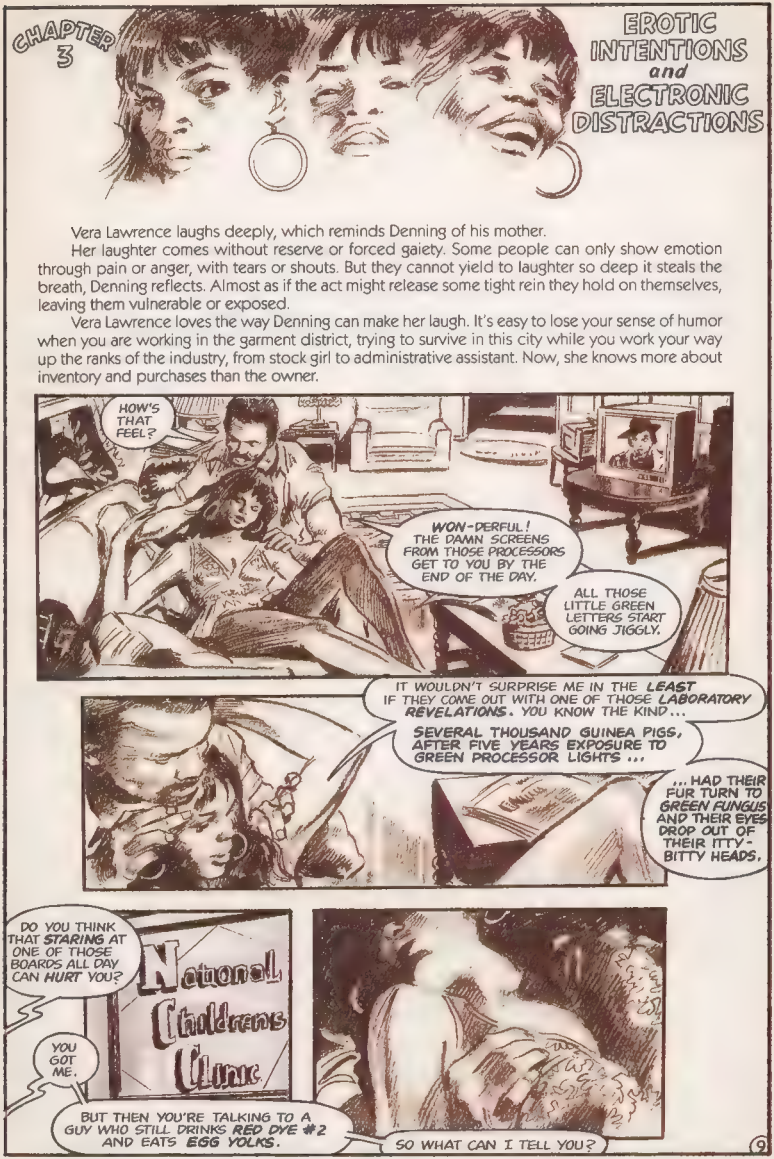
AH, I HAVEN'T EVEN TOLD ANOTHER WOMAN THIS. WHAT AM I DOING, TELLING IT TO YOU ?
AND ANYHOW, IT HAPPENED MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO. WHY SHOULD IT ALL BE LOCKED UP IN MY THROAT RIGHT NOW ? LIKE I'M CHOKING...
YEAH.
EVERYBODY AND THEIR MOTHER TELLS YOU TO LET GO OF IT.
BUT SOME THINGS, THEY GRAB YOU BY THE THROAT--
--YOU SWEAR TO GOD, THEY'LL STRANGLE YOU.
HOLLIS WAS...WAS GETTING AROUSED, YOU SEE. HE WANTED ME TO DO HIM WHILE HE...KEPT... HITTING ME WITH THAT BELT.
I WAS SCARED CRAZY. HE WAS SO ANGRY, I WAS AFRAID HE WAS GOING TO KILL ME. AND I WAS ASKING GOD, ASKING HIM NOT TO LET ME DIE.
I HADN'T BEEN INSIDE A CHURCH IN YEARS, AND HERE I WAS PRAYING "PLEASE, GOD, JUST LET ME BE ALIVE WHEN IT'S OVER."
LATER, WHEN IT WAS, I HAD ANOTHER FEAR, A DUMB FEAR, BUT ONE AS STRONG AS THE FEAR OF DYING HAD BEEN.
I WAS AFRAID OUR NEIGHBORS WOULD HEAR. AND HOW COULD I EXPLAIN HOW I LIVED WITH SUCH ABUSE?
WASN'T THAT STUPID? BUT AT THE TIME IT SEEMED SO IMPORTANT NO ONE KNOW.

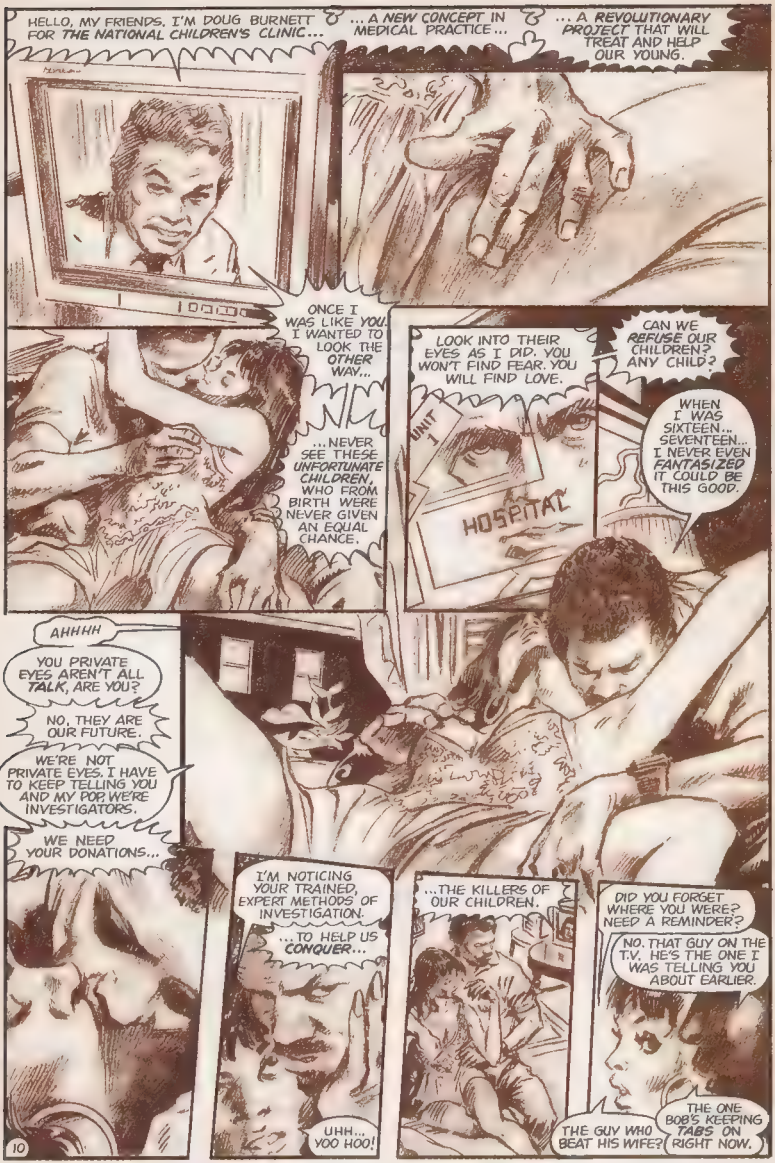

YOU KNOW WHAT SET THE WHOLE THING OFF? THE ARGUMENT WE'D HAD EARLIER? IT WAS ABOUT MY TAKING YOGA CLASSES.
HE SAID YOGA WAS THE FIRST STEP ON THE ROAD TO DOING DRUGS AND GOING TO ORGIES AND WHAT WAS WRONG WITH OUR COUNTRY.
HE'D REALLY SPEAK LIKE THAT. SOME PEOPLE DO, YOU KNOW?
ANYHOW, HE WAS TRYING TO SAVE ME FROM MYSELF.
MY SIR GALAHAD!
THAT'S WHEN I LEFT THAT CRAZY SONOFABITCH! I WENT BACK TO SCHOOL. I WORKED PART-TIME UNTIL I GRADUATED AND GOT THIS JOB. IT WASN'T EASY, BUT IT WAS BETTER. I EVEN TOOK SOME SELF-DEFENSE COURSES.
HE FORCED ME TO LOOK DEAD ON AT MY DESTRUCTIVE SIDES. I REALIZED THAT THERE WAS SOME PART OF ME THAT DISLIKED MYSELF, SO I'D SOUGHT OUT SOMEONE WHO COULD PUNISH ME.
THE THINGS MEN AND WOMEN CAN DO TO EACH OTHER.
THE THINGS HUMAN BEINGS CAN DO TO EACH OTHER.

ANYHOW, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S PERSONAL.
I DIDN'T LIKE SEEING LEILA DEFENDING A HUSBAND WHO WAS BEATING THE SHIT OUT OF HER.
WELL, YOU'RE RIGHT, TOO.
WHEN I SAID "MEN AND WOMEN" BEFORE, IT'S BECAUSE I WAS THINKING OF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU WITH THIS GUY... AND IT BROUGHT BACK SOME OF THE BITTER, PETTY THINGS MY EX-WIFE AND I DID TO EACH OTHER.
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN?
IN A WAY. MY EX... SHE BLAMED ME FOR EVERYTHING THAT WAS WRONG WITH LIFE.
LIFE WITH A CAPITAL "L."
WITH SOME PEOPLE IT'S GOVERNMENT OR TAXES OR YOGA THAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD.
WITH HER, THERE WAS ONE THING WRONG FOR EVERYTHING...
ME.
6

ONE DAY IN PARTICULAR... IT ALL HIT THE FAN. OF COURSE, THAT WAS THE DAY I DECIDED TO FIGHT BACK. I DON'T MEAN PHYSICALLY, JUST VERBALLY. I GUESS SHE WAS USED TO ME ACTING LIKE A WHIPPED PUPPY DOG.
SHE WAS HAMMERING HER FISTS ON ME, SCREAMING. GOD, I DON'T KNOW WHAT NAME SHE DIDN'T CALL ME, WHAT FAULT I DIDN'T HAVE.
AND THIS ANGER... IT ROSE UP IN ME... WHOOSH!... AS I STOOD THERE, LIFTING MY ARMS TO PROTECT MY FACE.
IT WAS AS IF ALL THE BAD TIMES CAUGHT UP WITH ME IN ONE FURIOUS SECOND.
I WANTED TO SLUG HER BACK SO BADLY. YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT BEING SCARED. WELL, THAT SCARED ME. I WAS AFRAID THAT IF I HIT HER, MAYBE I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO STOP... THAT I'D NEVER GET THAT WAVE OF ANGER BACK IN CHECK.
I WAS SCARED BECAUSE I HATED HER, AND I HAD LOVED HER, AND HOW COULD I HATE SOMEONE I HAD LOVED...
...SO BADLY THAT I WAS AFRAID I MIGHT KILL HER IF I LET ONE BLOW LAND.
BUT IT'S FUNNY... BECAUSE I WAS ALSO SCARED OF SOMETHING ELSE... PROBABLY THE MORE REALISTIC THING THAT WOULD HAPPEN.
I'D NEVER HIT A WOMAN IN MY LIFE... AND MORE LIKELY THAN BEATING HER TO A BLOODY PULP, I'D HAVE SAID, "I'M SORRY."
NEITHER THING SEEMED LIKE SOMETHING I WANTED TO DO.
SO I RAISED MY ARMS IN THE AIR AND JUST BACKED AWAY AND WALKED ON OUT.
EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE I MAKE A WISE DECISION.

AH HA! BULLSEYE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
IT'S HIM! OUR KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR!
AND LOOKIT WITH HIM! QUEEN GUENEVERE HER BIG BAD SELF!
DIERDRE, YOU TAKE THE CAMERA. SEE IF YOU CAN GET SOME MORE SHOTS OF THE WOMAN.
I'LL FOLLOW DARLING DOUG. HE'LL PROBABLY HEAD FOR HIS CAR.
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE ONE OF THESE.
IT'LL BE EASIER THAN TAILING DOUG IF HE GOES OVER THE SPEED LIMIT.
I HOPE HE DOESN'T.
I'M NOT THAT GOOD A DRIVER. IF I WERE EVER IN A HIGH SPEED CHASE, I'D PROBABLY END UP--
--KILLING MYSELF AND HALF OF BROOKLYN.
SHIT!
GONE.

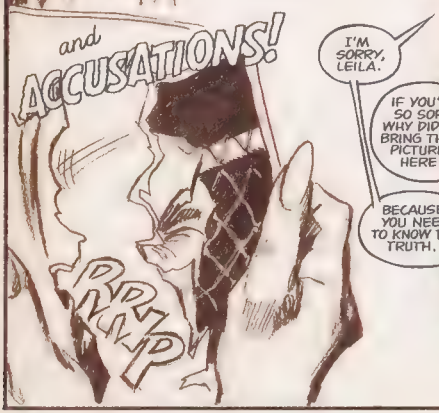

CHAPTER 3
EROTIC INTENTIONS and ELECTRONIC DISTRACTIONS
Vera Lawrence laughs deeply, which reminds Denning of his mother.
Her laughter comes without reserve or forced gaiety. Some people can only show emotion through pain or anger, with tears or shouts. But they cannot yield to laughter so deep it steals the breath, Denning reflects. Almost as if the act might release some tight rein they hold on themselves, leaving them vulnerable or exposed.
Vera Lawrence loves the way Denning can make her laugh. It's easy to lose your sense of humor when you are working in the garment district, trying to survive in this city while you work your way up the ranks of the industry, from stock girl to administrative assistant. Now, she knows more about inventory and purchases than the owner.
HOW'S THAT FEEL?
WON-DERFUL! THE DAMN SCREENS FROM THOSE PROCESSORS GET TO YOU BY THE END OF THE DAY.
ALL THOSE LITTLE GREEN LETTERS START GOING JIGGLY.
IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IN THE LEAST IF THEY COME OUT WITH ONE OF THOSE LABORATORY REVELATIONS. YOU KNOW THE KIND...
SEVERAL THOUSAND GUINEA PIGS, AFTER FIVE YEARS EXPOSURE TO GREEN PROCESSOR LIGHTS ...
...HAD THEIR FUR TURN TO GREEN FUNGUS AND THEIR EYES DROP OUT OF THEIR ITTY-BITTY HEADS.
DO YOU THINK THAT STARING AT ONE OF THOSE BOARDS ALL DAY CAN HURT YOU?
National Childrens Clinic
YOU GOT ME.
BUT THEN YOU'RE TALKING TO A GUY WHO STILL DRINKS RED DYE #2 AND EATS EGG YOLKS.
SO WHAT CAN I TELL YOU?

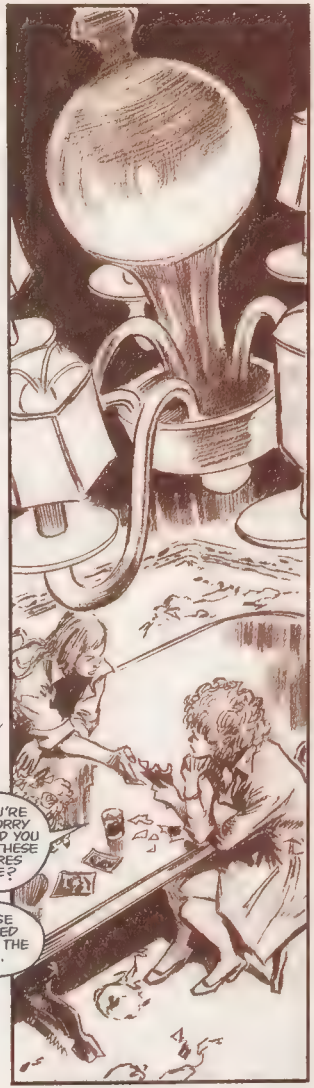

HELLO, MY FRIENDS. I'M DOUG BURNETT FOR THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CLINIC...
...A NEW CONCEPT IN MEDICAL PRACTICE...
...A REVOLUTIONARY PROJECT THAT WILL TREAT AND HELP OUR YOUNG.
ONCE I WAS LIKE YOU. I WANTED TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY...
...NEVER SEE THESE UNFORTUNATE CHILDREN, WHO FROM BIRTH WERE NEVER GIVEN AN EQUAL CHANCE.
LOOK INTO THEIR EYES AS I DID. YOU WON'T FIND FEAR. YOU WILL FIND LOVE.
UNIT 1
HOSPITAL
CAN WE REFUSE OUR CHILDREN? ANY CHILD?
WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN... SEVENTEEN... I NEVER EVEN FANTASIZED IT COULD BE THIS GOOD.
AHHHH
YOU PRIVATE EYES AREN'T ALL TALK, ARE YOU?
NO, THEY ARE OUR FUTURE.
WE'RE NOT PRIVATE EYES. I HAVE TO KEEP TELLING YOU AND MY POP WE'RE INVESTIGATORS.
WE NEED YOUR DONATIONS...
I'M NOTICING YOUR TRAINED, EXPERT METHODS OF INVESTIGATION.
...TO HELP US CONQUER...
UHH... YOO HOO!
...THE KILLERS OF OUR CHILDREN.
DID YOU FORGET WHERE YOU WERE? NEED A REMINDER?
NO. THAT GUY ON THE T.V. HE'S THE ONE I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT EARLIER.
THE GUY WHO BEAT HIS WIFE?
THE ONE BOB'S KEEPING TABS ON RIGHT NOW.

Leila Burnett stares at the photographs with eyes that first deny what they see, then become intense with anger, which in turn is replaced by a dark sorrow, her eyes those of a mourner at a graveside finally admitting a loved one is dead.

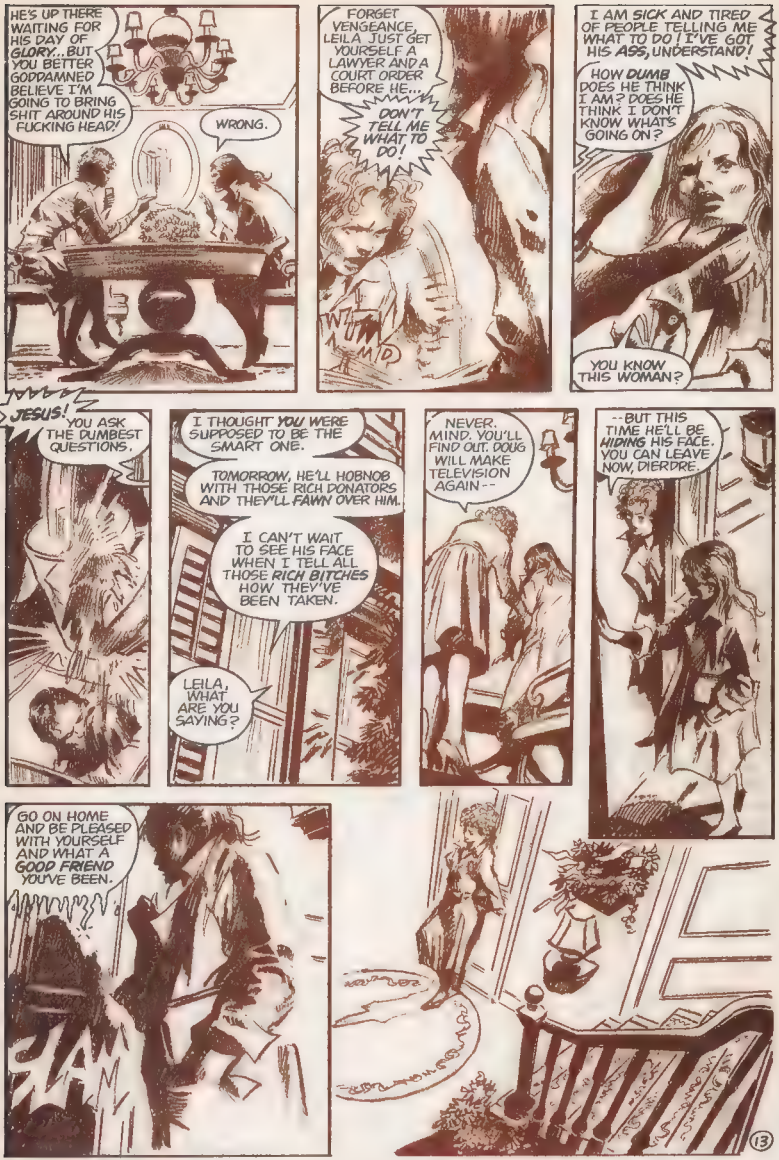
Dierdre watches Leila try to cling to some vestige of her *Good Housekeeping/Cosmopolitan* dream, and failing. Dierdre wonders how she could have been so excited when Rainier had taken those pictures two days ago.

One is caught up in the moment of the chase and vindication, and forgets what the confirmation really means.


and ACCUSATIONS!
RRIP
I'M SORRY, LEILA.
IF YOU'RE SO SORRY WHY DID YOU BRING THESE PICTURES HERE?
BECAUSE YOU NEED TO KNOW THE TRUTH.



THIS...
ARE THESE PICTURES THE TRUTH? THE LAST SEVEN YEARS OF MY LIFE... WHAT DOUG AND I...
WHAT WE MEANT TO EACH OTHER? WHAT WAS THAT?
COME ON, TELL ME!
A LIE YOU WERE TOO FRIGHTENED TO LET GO OF.
WHO IS THIS...
THIS SLUT!
I DON'T KNOW. I LOST HER. DOUG RETURNED STRAIGHT HOME VIA THE BELT PARKWAY AFTER THESE PICTURES WERE TAKEN.
THE SONOFABITCH!
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, LEILA. I ONLY WANTED TO HELP.
YOU KNOW WHERE THE TWO-TIMING BASTARD IS NOW? OUT IN DOBB'S FERRY, GETTING READY FOR SOME CHILDREN'S CHARITY BENEFIT TOMORROW.
MUCH HE CARES ABOUT KIDS.
HE SURE NEVER WANTED ANY.


HE'S UP THERE WAITING FOR HIS DAY OF GLORY... BUT YOU BETTER GODDAMNED BELIEVE I'M GOING TO BRING SHIT AROUND HIS FUCKING HEAD!
WRONG.
FORGET VENGEANCE, LEILA. JUST GET YOURSELF A LAWYER AND A COURT ORDER BEFORE HE...
DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO!
WUMP
I AM SICK AND TIRED OF PEOPLE TELLING ME WHAT TO DO! I'VE GOT HIS ASS, UNDERSTAND!
HOW DUMB DOES HE THINK I AM? DOES HE THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU KNOW THIS WOMAN?
JESUS! YOU ASK THE DUMBEST QUESTIONS.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE SMART ONE.
TOMORROW, HE'LL HOBNOB WITH THOSE RICH DONATORS AND THEY'LL FAWN OVER HIM.
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HIS FACE WHEN I TELL ALL THOSE RICH BITCHES HOW THEY'VE BEEN TAKEN.
LEILA, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
NEVER MIND. YOU'LL FIND OUT. DOUG WILL MAKE TELEVISION AGAIN--
--BUT THIS TIME HE'LL BE HIDING HIS FACE. YOU CAN LEAVE NOW, DIERDRE.
GO ON HOME AND BE PLEASED WITH YOURSELF AND WHAT A GOOD FRIEND YOU'VE BEEN.
SLAM

CHAPTER 5
HOMEFRIES AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Rainier watches Dierdre spear distractedly at his breakfast. There is solace in the act of eating.

A part of Rainier is disheartened by what he hears in Dierdre's voice when she speaks of Leila. It is a voice filled with the knowledge that often there is no right course of action. One event leads to another.

Triumph, so fiercely solid you can almost touch it, turns to disintegrating ashes under your fingers. He has felt the same way too many times.

There is another part of him that is bemused by her, as once again he witnesses the paradoxical nature of human beings. He holds an amused, silent wager with himself: How long will it take Dierdre to convince Ted to investigate the National Children's Charity?

Ted's three quarters hooked now, Rainier calculates. Leila's condemnation has distracted Dierdre from the main thrust of her argument, but with another couple of minutes on the alleged victimization of kids, she'll be reeling Ted in.

I FELT LIKE A BUTCHER GOING OUT TO A SLAUGHTERHOUSE.
I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE TAKEN AN AXE AND PUT IT RIGHT BETWEEN HER EYES.
MAYBE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF TED AND I SHOWED HER THE PHOTOS.

NO. SHE NEEDED SOMEONE SHE KNEW... SOMEONE SHE COULD HATE FOR A WHILE. MAYBE... ONE OF THESE DAYS... SHE'LL REALIZE I CARED.
I HOPE SHE DOES, ANYWAY.
LISTEN, ABOUT THE
ABOUT THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CLINIC.
HERE IT COMES, TED, THE BIT ABOUT OUR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY.
I WANT YOU TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THIS, 'CAUSE SHE'S ABOUT TO RUN IT PAST US FOR THE THIRD TIME.
I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY NEED TO REHASH THE WHOLE SITUATION.
I KNOW THE TWO OF YOU WILL DO THE RIGHT THING.
SWAP SWAP
COME ON, BOB. DON'T BE LIKE THAT. YOU CAN SHARE A COUPLE OF COLD HOMEFRIES.
THE PLATE, THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO.
ANYHOW, I'VE GIVEN YOU WHAT LEILA SAID, ALMOST WORD FOR WORD--
YUUH.
--AND THE TWO OF YOU ARE TOO HIP.. WELL, TED IS ANYWAY.. NOT TO HAVE SOME HEALTHY SKEPTICISM ABOUT WHAT THOSE THREATS MIGHT MEAN.
DIERDRE, THIS IS A DISTRAUGHT WOMAN SPEAKING.

TRUE. BUT SUPPOSING THIS CHARITY ISN'T LEGIT. IT'S LITTLE KIDS WHO ARE REALLY GETTING SHAFTED.
PEOPLE THINKING OF SOMEBODY OTHER THAN THEMSELVES DIG OUT THEIR HARD-EARNED BUCKS--
--WHICH THEN GET SHOVED IN SOME CON MAN'S POCKET.
PIERPRE... WILLIAM CURRUTHERS IS INVOLVED IN THIS CHARITY. HIS COMPANY GOES BACK TO THE DAYS OF THE TROLLEY CARS.
HE'S HARDLY A CANDIDATE FOR A CON MAN.
I'M NOT TRYING TO CONVICT ANYONE.
I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE THOSE KIDS GET THE FUNDS TO HELP CURE THEM.
ALL RIGHT. IF WE DID TRAVEL UP TO DOBB'S FERRY, WHAT'S OUR APPROACH? I GUESS WE COULD PRETEND TO BE POTENTIAL WEALTHY DONATORS.
DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT'S US?
TRAIL DUST
OR WE COULD JUST FLOAT AROUND AND RABBLE-ROUSE, SEE IF WE HIT ANY NERVES OR FIND A HINT OF SOMETHING SHADY.
I LIKE THAT BETTER.
JUST REMEMBER OUR OBJECTIVE. IT ISN'T JUST TO PISS THESE PEOPLE OFF.
RIGHT. I NEVER FORGET THE OBJECTIVE.
ARE WE IN TROUBLE?
JUST REMIND ME TO BRING THE SHORT LEASH.
16

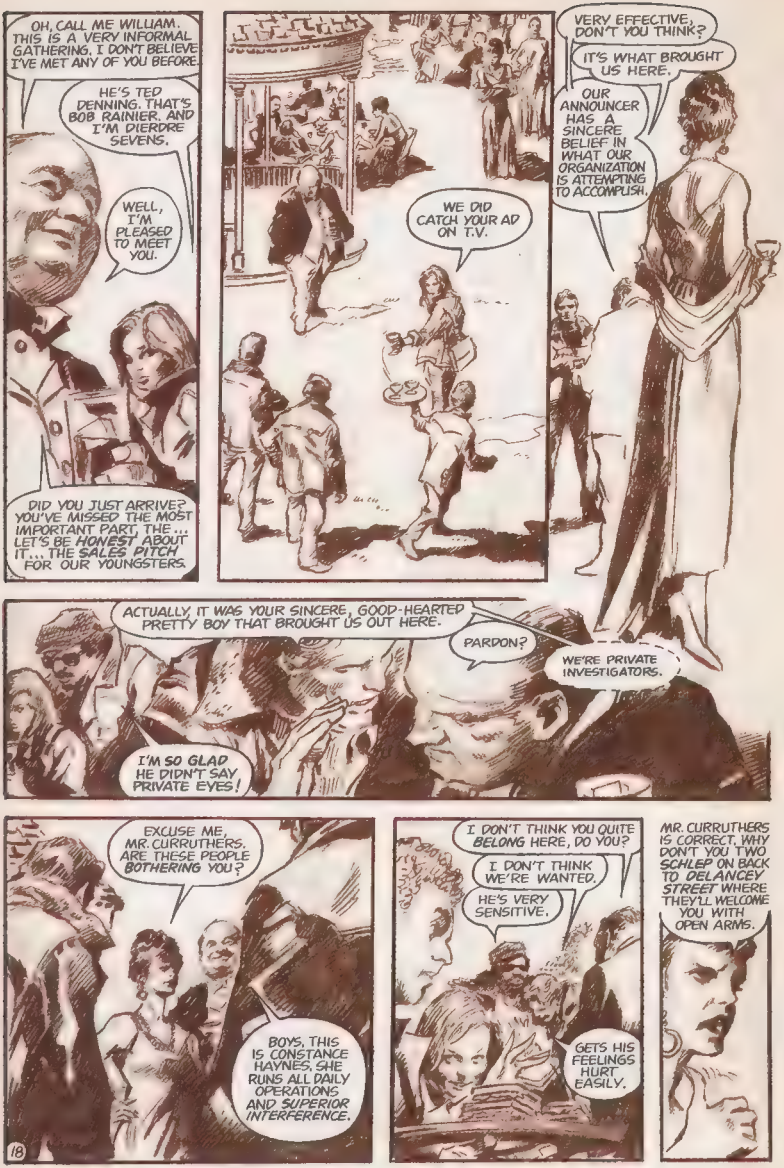
They certainly have a beautiful day for it, Denning reflects. Blue, troubleless skies. A sweep of the Hudson River beyond. Dobb's Ferry tranquility. Social chit-chat and hors d'oeuvres.

Denning spots William Curruthers immediately. The man has the instinct of a star performer who unerringly knows the right spot center stage that will draw his audience's attention to him. Dignified. Accustomed to authority in a manner that only comes from having old money.

Rainier spots the second-in-command. She is already giving them the eye. Very good at her job. Trouble, without a doubt. She's going to question their presence, and quickly. An NCC trouble-shooter, if not valuable, personal aide to Curruthers.

She revels in this scene of wealth and power, but her background is middle class, and she's tried to shed her past like a snake sheds its skin. Still, you can see the street smarts in her violet eyes.

GIVE THEM THIRTY SECONDS WITH CURRUTHERS, RAINIER FIGURES, AND SHE'LL BE IN THEIR EYES LIKE CUT ONIONS.
HELLO, YOU'RE MR. CURRUTHERS, AREN'T YOU?


OH, CALL ME WILLIAM. THIS IS A VERY INFORMAL GATHERING. I DON'T BELIEVE I'VE MET ANY OF YOU BEFORE.
HE'S TED DENNING. THAT'S BOB RAINIER. AND I'M DIERDRE SEVENS.
WELL, I'M PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
DID YOU JUST ARRIVE? YOU'VE MISSED THE MOST IMPORTANT PART, THE ... LET'S BE HONEST ABOUT IT... THE SALES PITCH FOR OUR YOUNGSTERS.
WE DID CATCH YOUR AD ON T.V.
VERY EFFECTIVE, DON'T YOU THINK?
IT'S WHAT BROUGHT US HERE.
OUR ANNOUNCER HAS A SINCERE BELIEF IN WHAT OUR ORGANIZATION IS ATTEMPTING TO ACCOMPLISH.
ACTUALLY, IT WAS YOUR SINCERE, GOOD-HEARTED PRETTY BOY THAT BROUGHT US OUT HERE.
PARDON?
WE'RE PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS.
I'M SO GLAD HE DIDN'T SAY PRIVATE EYES!
EXCUSE ME, MR. CURRUTHERS. ARE THESE PEOPLE BOTHERING YOU?
BOYS, THIS IS CONSTANCE HAYNES. SHE RUNS ALL DAILY OPERATIONS AND SUPERIOR INTERFERENCE.
I DON'T THINK YOU QUITE BELONG HERE, DO YOU?
I DON'T THINK WE'RE WANTED.
HE'S VERY SENSITIVE.
GETS HIS FEELINGS HURT EASILY.
MR. CURRUTHERS IS CORRECT. WHY DON'T YOU TWO SCHLEP ON BACK TO DELANCEY STREET WHERE THEY'LL WELCOME YOU WITH OPEN ARMS.

OUT HERE, THIS IS GOD'S COUNTRY.
BET GOD HAS TO BUY A A TUX IF HE WANTS TO GET INVITED TO ONE OF THESE WING-DINGS.
AND I'LL BET YOU THINK YOU'RE A REAL WIT.
BUT YOU'RE NOT.
I DON'T KNOW YOUR NAMES. AND DON'T WANT TO. YOU TWO ARE MEANINGLESS.
YOU ARE SMALL, IGNORANT MEN WITHOUT ANY CLASS, THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU COULD DISRUPT AN IMPORTANT AFFAIR LIKE THIS.
INDULGE ME, MR. CURRUTHERS, FOR JUST A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS. NO OFFENSE, BUT...
THE FUNDS THAT ARE COLLECTED FOR THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CLINIC, JUST HOW ARE THEY DISTRIBUTED TO THE VARIOUS AREAS WHERE CLINICS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED?
DO YOU HAVE BRANCHES IN EACH STATE THAT WILL OVERSEE THE PROPER UTILIZATION OF FUNDS?
THOSE ARE QUESTIONS MUCH TOO COMPLICATED TO ANSWER IN A CAVALIER FASHION, NOR IS IT ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS.
I ALSO FIND IT PERSONALLY OFFENSIVE.
LET ME SAY... IF YOU TRY TO HURT SUCH A WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOR AS THE N.C.C... IF YOU COMMIT ANY SLANDEROUS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST MY PERSON...
... MY ATTORNEYS
WILL BURY YOU
IN LAWSUITS.
I CAN AFFORD IT, CAN YOU?
I'D HAVE TO CHECK OUR BANK ACCOUNT.
UHHH
I THINK YOU'VE GOT A GRAVY STAIN ON YOUR SHIRT, BILL.
WHAT?
BLUB
19

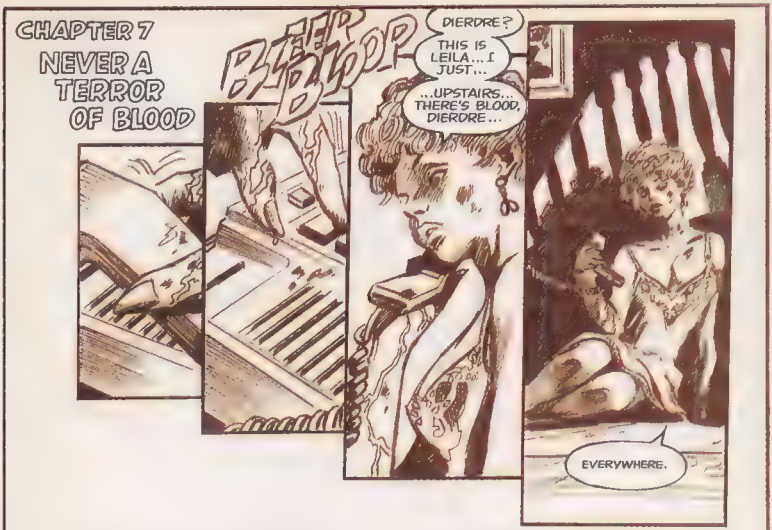
SHOWTIME, BOYS!
I HEARD YOU SAY YOU WERE DETECTIVES, YOU WANT THE POLICE HERE?
YOU WANT YOUR LICENSES REVOKED?
YOU THINK I'M SCREWING AROUND? YOU CALL ME ON THIS.
AND I'LL MAKE YOU WISH YOU WERE CRAWLING AROUND THE GUTTERS YOU LEFT.
NO MORE SMALL TALK! GET OUT OF HERE. I'M NOT GOING TO SAY IT A SECOND TIME.
WE'LL LEAVE NO PROBLEM.
ALL WE WANTED WERE A FEW ANSWERS, NOT TROUBLE.
YOU HAD TO DO THAT, DIDN'T YOU?
BLAME IT ON THE THREE STOOGES. THEY WERE A BAD INFLUENCE ON ME WHEN I WAS A KID.
WELL, I SAW YOU TWO AT IN BEAUTIFULLY.
WHAT IN HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE, LADY?
YOU KEEP SHOWING UP WHERE YOU'RE NOT WANTED. I CALLED MY WIFE LAST NIGHT. SHE TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR LITTLE "GIFT."
THIS WOMAN IS THE REASON MY WIFE COULDN'T ATTEND THE BENEFIT.
THESE TWO ASSHOLES WITH HER ARE PROBABLY THE PRIVATE EYES WHO DID HER SNOOPING FOR HER.
HE CALLED US PRIVATE EYES.
I HEARD HIM.

JUST LET US GO THROUGH.
YOU KNOW, JUST TO TEACH YOU A LESSON...
MAYBE I OUGHT TO KICK YOUR ASS.
NO, NO, NO. YOU CAN'T DO THAT.
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE IN ORDER TO DO THAT YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME FIRST.
NOW, I KNOW YOU'RE A GUY WHO LIKES TO PROVE HOW TOUGH HE IS BY USING HIS FISTS ON HIS WIFE.
I WON'T EVEN USE THE WORD "HONOR." THAT'S OBVIOUSLY NOT IN YOUR VOCABULARY.
YOU'RE A MAN WHO'S MADE IT ON A PHONY SMILE AND FANCY BRIDGEWORK. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE AFRAID TO FIGHT ME.
IF I RUIN THE SMILE AND BRIDGEWORK...
JUST FOR A CHANGE OF PACE, SWEETHEART...WHY DON'T YOU TRY ME?
THAT IS, UNLESS YOU WANT THESE FOLKS TO KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY ARE...A MAN WITHOUT HEART... WITHOUT GRACE...
...YOU'LL BE OUT OF A JOB AND NOBODY'LL LOVE YOU ANYMORE.
WHOOPS! YOU MISSED!

NOT TOO GOOD, TOUGH GUY. THIS KEEPS UP, I'LL HAVE TO HAND YOU OVER TO DIERDRE.
SHE TAKES CARE OF MY LIGHT WORK.
HEY! LET'S KEEP THE FACTS STRAIGHT. I ALREADY PUT HIM DOWN FOR THE COUNT.
I'M THE ONE WHO SOFTENED HIM UP FOR YOU.
SORRY. I FORGOT.
TED! WATCH OUT!
WHUMP
LOOK WHAT WE HAVE HERE, BOYS AND GIRLS.
CHAUFFEURS WITH GUNS. ISN'T THAT CUTE?
SMACK
AHHHHH!
WHAP
THAT'S
NOT QUITE THE KIND
OF TALK
LISTEN, GUYS, WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS.
I HAD IN MIND.

NOT SO EASY, HUH, HOTSHOT!
KLUNK
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU LIKE A NICE CLEAN FIGHT.

ONE MOVE, AND I STEP SO HARD YOU'LL CROAK LIKE A FROG FOR THE NEXT MONTH.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
YOU'RE NOT REALLY GOING TO ASK ME A DUMB QUESTION LIKE THAT, ARE YOU?
SORRY, I HAD A MOMENTARY LAPSE.
DUMB BASTARD!
I HOPE CURRUTHERS PAYS YOU ENOUGH TO BUY THE AMOUNT OF EXCEDRIN YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO CURE THAT HEADACHE.
DID WE LEARN ANYTHING?
YEAH, BUT DID WE LEARN ANYTHING ABOUT THE N.C.C.
YES. THAT THIS IS GOD'S COUNTRY... THAT DOUG ISN'T A WIMP... THAT CHAUFFEURS CARRY GUNS, AND THAT MY HEAD HURTS.
DAMNED IF I KNOW.



Dierdre had said Leila'd spoken of blood, in a voice almost dead. How had Dierdre put it? Oh, yes. As if Leila had shut herself down, closed off the input valves, an act to prevent the brain from overload.

But the subject was still blood.

Denning doesn't want to see it. He has seen blood, fresh and slick and rapidly drying, seen violent death.

Don't let it be that bad, he asks no one in particular, but he doesn't hold much hope that it won't be.

TED...
I SEE IT.
ARE YOU THE POLICE? I DIDN'T CALL THE POLICE.
DIERDRE SENT US. SHE SAID YOU HAD SOME KIND OF TROUBLE OUT HERE.
WE'RE PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS. MAY WE COME IN, MRS. BURNETT?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO FOUGHT WITH DOUG YESTERDAY, AREN'T YOU?
HE WEPT... LIKE A BABY...WHAT WAS HE DOING CRYING?
I SAID," SUFFER, DARLING. SUFFER! WHATEVER MADE ME THINK YOU WERE SO STRONG."

I THREW THOSE... THOSE DISGUSTING PICTURES OF HIM AND THAT...
...THAT...
...FLOOZIE! HE WOULDN'T SAY WHO SHE WAS! ALL HE COULD CRY ABOUT WAS HOW CURRUTHERS LEFT HIM LYING ON THE GROUND.
EVERY DREAM HE HAD WAS DYING. I TOLD HIM HE HAD KILLED ALL OF MINE.
BUT I NEVER KNEW THERE WOULD BE SO MUCH BLOOD FLOWING FROM DEAD DREAMS... IN ALL MY TERROR OF THEIR DYING, IT WAS NEVER A TERROR OF BLOOD.
WHAT HAPPENED, MRS. BURNETT?
UPSTAIRS.
WE'LL TAKE A LOOK.
SHE'S IN SHOCK.
YOU READY?
NO. BUT I WON'T BE ANY MORE READY FIVE MINUTES FROM NOW.
LET'S GET IT OVER WITH.
TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE!

Detectives Inc.

THE MOVIE

The Short Version — Part 2

Maggie Greer as Leila Burnett has to maintain an unblinking, catatonic stare as the camera pulls back and up the stairway where she has seen or committed murder.

Detective 1st/Grade Bishop (Nat Drayton) reacts solemnly as attendants pass with Doug Burnett's corpse in a body bag.

If you are going to take on the mammoth task of writing and directing a feature-length movie, if you are going to commit the energy and time that is required to do such a wonderfully insane creative endeavor, you had better give yourself plenty of reasons for undertaking such an immense project right from the start. If you don't have sufficient motivation, somewhere months down the line, when there are apparently a hundred insurmountable problems, you are going to end up talking out loud to yourself, asking questions like "How in the hell did I get myself into the middle of all this?"

The Dierdre Sevens character was one of the extra reasons I gave myself, beyond having been given the chance to bring Denning and Rainier to movie-life. I created the role for my wife, Marsha Childers McGregor. When she read the first pages of the script, she thought she'd like to play the battered wife. I told her I'd seen her play the victim, and knew she could do it exceedingly well, but that Dierdre offered a performer more "colors" to work with. Dierdre would give Marsha the chance to play a character with a history of pain, a sense of dignity, a commitment to move positively on her instincts, a quirky sense of humor, to be as it were, the hero, who, like Denning and Rainier, despite her flaws, wants to do the right thing, a person who cares about what happens to the people around her.

Over the year-plus it would take to shoot the movie, there would be some who would lose faith that it would ever be completed.

You need positive energy when you are in the midst of the hard times of a collaborative creative endeavor. Without it, energy is wasted on situations that have little to do with the effort of getting a movie finished, and the joy of doing this precious thing, of telling stories, can become lost. You can become lost in ego and politics.

I was fortunate. I always had Marsha and my producer, Ed Via, who never lost faith or trust in me, though there were times I was afraid I would lose it in myself.

On the other hand, as the months of production wore on, and difficulties mounted, there was a part of me that would never give in, no matter how much personal doubt I had. I would not quit. I would be damned if I would lay down and play dead. I would not have Ed involved with this, to have put his trust in me, not to finish this movie just because the going got tough. I would not settle for half a movie. We would finish, one way or the other.

I have already heard some Revisionist history on this next point.

There were some people who felt I should only do a

Denning and Rainier (Alex Simmons and Richard Douglass) on the spot, still able to trade a few quips, even when they are under duress.

Rob Roy McGregor shows Rainier and Dierdre a trick. Rainier offers some advice on his act, but Rob Roy doesn't seem convinced.

Text by Don McGregor

Article Design by Eric Goto

Dierdre Sevens and Rainier on the Brighton Beach Board walk. The crowd of onlookers was tremendous, held at bay just out of camera range.

The chauffeur (Ron Barry) delivers a forceful fist to Rainier's face. Don't worry, Rich, the script says you win the fight.

Rainier retaliates with an elbow to the chin, in the first of three backhanded blows to knock the chauffeur out of his face.

Dierdre (Marsha Childers McGregor) steps on the throat of one of Doug's helpers (Robert Mulvey), and threatens him with less than 20-20 vision if he gets out of line.

Director/Writer Don McGregor prays it won't rain and cancel the rest of the parking lot fight. If the scene isn't finished that day it means travelling on location to the Cantina Restaurant and getting the cast and crew to find a mutually agreeable day when they are all free. This can be a director's nightmare.

ten minute featurette on the characters. The standard method of making movies is to do a sample piece of a subject and let it go. There are some who claim that I said, in the beginning, that *Detectives Inc.* was going to have a short running time.

I cannot imagine myself saying such a thing.

Some people suggested that approach. Maybe those were the words some people wanted to hear. I don't know.

For me, what I do know is, I am a storyteller, whether the medium is books, comics, or movies.

A storyteller.

And in the beginning the story-teller did not even know what story he was going to tell now that he had been given the rare privilege of doing a movie. And if the storyteller didn't even know that, how in the hell would he know how long the story was going to be?

Well, the storyteller knew he didn't have the budget to go around blowing up buildings, so the abortion clinic story line I had been working on for the new *Detectives Inc.* comic series was not feasible. The storyteller began looking for something to write about, for something that he could feel was worth writing about.

The script, when finished, ran 130 pages. The scale, in movie mathematics, is that one page of script averages about 1 minute of viewing time. I promised Ed that when I cut the final print it would come in at two hours or under

Every phase of making the movie, from the day we held auditions to the last day of shooting, is filled with a multitude of stories, some incredibly wild, some with unpredictable tragedy, some with desperate ingenuity, some head-shakingly absurd. I'd love to tell you some of them. I think you'd find them intriguing. Some would give new meaning to the old phrase, "Truth is stranger than fiction."

But those stories are for another article.

This is the short version, remember?

I wanted to give the actors the kind of support and positive feedback I try to give an artist when we are working together on a comic. The actual process of writing is seldom a lot of fun. It is a lonely, tense time, a confrontation with a blank sheet of paper and your solitary talent. It is a time when you often feel you will never find a way to most effectively tell the story you want to tell, to give the audience the best you have at that point in time. That is what you owe your readers, every time out: the best you have. You can't give them anything more. You don't owe them anything more.

In comics, there are magic moments. Some of those occur during writing, but for me they usually occur when I

Writer/Director Don McGregor carefully rehearses the complex action sequence in the parking lot, probably wishing he could take the tumble over the car hood. Don's never been accused of being totally sane.

Denning (Alex Simmons) lets Doug Burnett (Jay Johnston) have it. From Doug's reaction, this looks like the prelim to his breaking into Pepto Bismol ads.

first see the artist bring the characters and scenes to life. Like Gene Colan, whose artwork you see beautifully reproduced in this book. When Gene brings Denning, Rainier, and Dierdre to life, then I am five years old again, a young boy with my nose pressed to the candy-store window, looking up at comic books hanging under the store ceiling like gaily-colored banners.

Anything is possible.

You can try to reach the brass ring and touch it, grasp it.

When you have seen an artist like Gene Colan add his artistry, his creative energy, to your script, when you see him give you more than you could have hoped when you were writing the script, all your doubts and insecurities are held at bay and you are anxious to get back behind that typewriter and face that blank sheet of paper again. Because your love for story-telling has been reaffirmed, given new life, and it makes you feel that this time you can do better, try harder.

In doing a movie, it is the performers who bring your work to life. Alex Simmons, Richard Douglass and Marsha Childers McGregor brought Denning, Rainier and Sevens to life with their hard work, their skill, their striving for their best. I don't know how most of them really felt about their characters, but watching them on the monitors, as Mark Gasper filmed them, gave me that same elation of being a child again, full of enthusiasm and possibilities.

I wanted to give the actors room to interpret those characters, to be less the dictator than I had seen some directors be. I especially tried to let Rich find his own interpretation of Rainier, since I had once considered playing the character. I want to thank Rich for all those long hours, for the months of showing up on the set ready to go in that year-plus of filming, for excruciating times such as having to sit in 100+ degree heat in a winter coat, with fake blood and real sweat running down his hand.

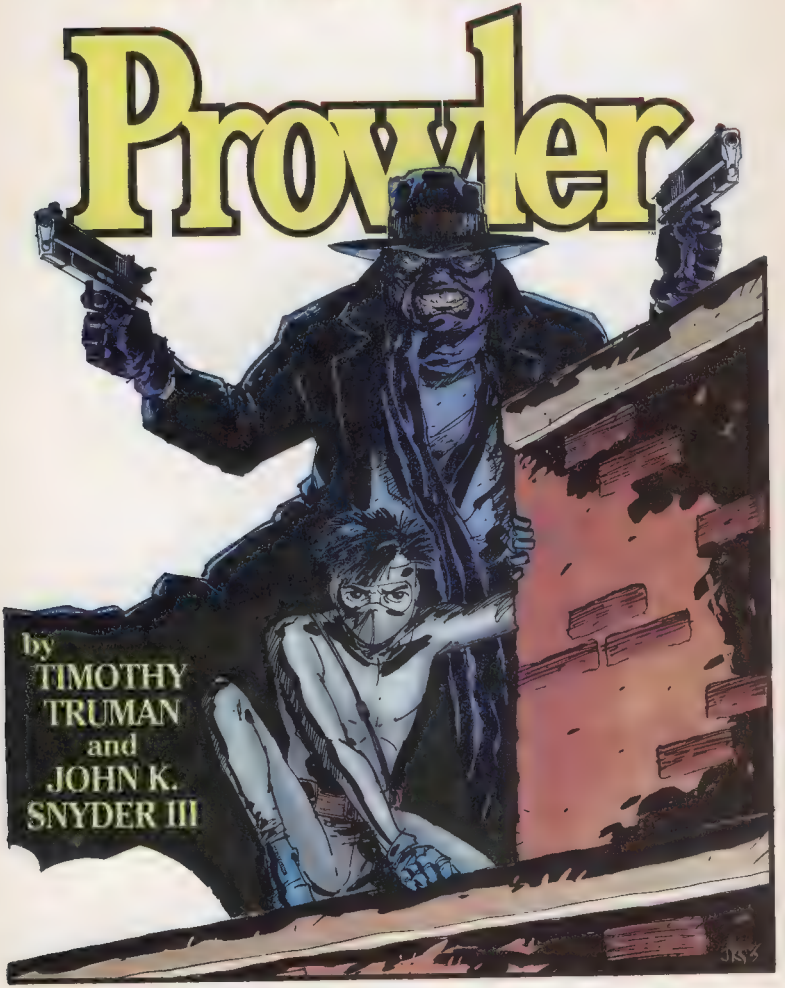
Mark Gasper, our Director of Photography, gave everything he had on those long days, making sure the lighting was right, pushing for extra time to get whatever shot was requested. There were some shots that, if I'd known before-hand how much time and trouble would be required to pull off correctly, I might have thought twice about. But Mark always tried his best to find a way to shoot them, and offered many ideas of how a shot might be accomplished if the original concept became unworkable for sound reasons, or lack of space, or whatever reason might make a shot impossible.

Making a movie is like going to war, and we were in the midst of the battle.

Next issue — Detectives Inc. — The Movie — Part 3

A tough stunt, as Denning (Alex Simmons) is tossed over a car hood by Doug Burnett (Jay Johnston). Alex manages to get good height and control to make the stunt work effectively. Okay, Alex, since you've done this scene so well, we'll only have to shoot it another dozen times. No one said playing a private investigator was easy.

IN THE CITY OF BLOOD AND MAGIC
...ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN



MONTHLY FROM ECLIPSE

ECLIPSE

DON McGREGOR MARSHALL ROGERS

Detectives Inc.

© 1980 Don McGregor and Marshall Rogers

Mystery Magazine says: "**Detectives, Inc.** is a hard-hitting story told in brutally realistic terms...

"Detectives, Inc. is a dramatic book: it is tense and powerful and draws one into its action...It is easy to be attracted to a Captain America or a Superman, because he is a dream, an ideal. It is less easy to become attracted to a human being, and this is one of the things that Don McGregor and Marshall Rogers do here: they assert (and) show) that two detectives, the divorced wife, two lovers separated by death from their common object of passion and others, can be just as exciting, as powerful, as dramatic an ensemble as the Avengers or the Justice League of America."

Peter Gillis
COMICS FEATURE

"This book has it all: nudity, homosexuality, bisexuality, abortion, poverty, race wars...and murder. Yet it lacks one thing that typical overground comics revel in—and that's sensationalism."

WHIZZARD

"Like a raw, cutting wind of the golden age of the private eye, *Detectives, Inc.* is gritty, very human, good reading and an eyeful."

Chris Steinbrunner, author of
The Films of Sherlock Holmes

"A solid private eye yarn with sparkling dialogue and two private dicks who care. If Culp and Cosby had been eyes instead of spies, this is what they would have been like."

Bob Randisi, author of
The Disappearance of Penny

"The writing and illustrations owe far more to the techniques of the motion picture than to comic books, with cross cutting and other film innovations used most effectively to tell the story of a murder with roots in a lesbian love affair."

Ellery Queen
Mystery Magazine

" *Detectives Inc.* is a tour de force for writer/creator Don McGregor and illustrator Marshall Rogers.

It is one of the new breed of mature underground productions that places people and relationships ahead of superheroism and bizarre, horrific plots.

McGregor's Culp and Cosby type detective team of Ted Denning and Bob Rainier live in a Philip Marlowe existence on the seamy side of 1980 New York. Although the plot is fairly simple, their lives are refreshingly complex and the two stories are well blended with the help of Rogers' excellent black and white illustrations. His use of light and shadow in the delineation of people and perfectly rendered New York locations mark this volume as his best work to date.

With *Detectives Inc.*, a new team of talented storytellers is born — one that should be writing new pages in the history of the graphic novel for some time to come."

Howard Zimmerman
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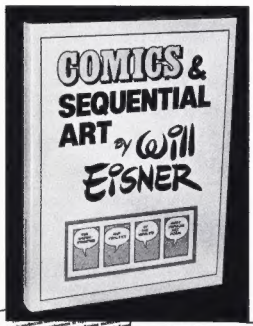

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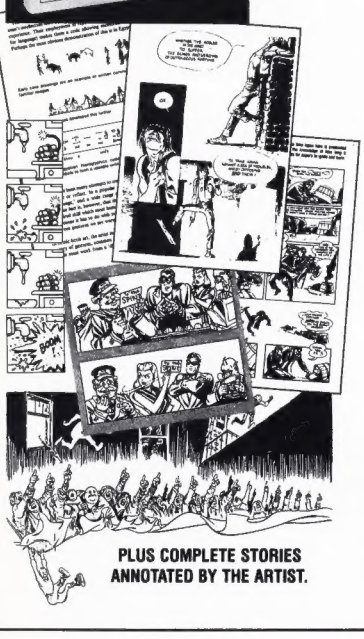

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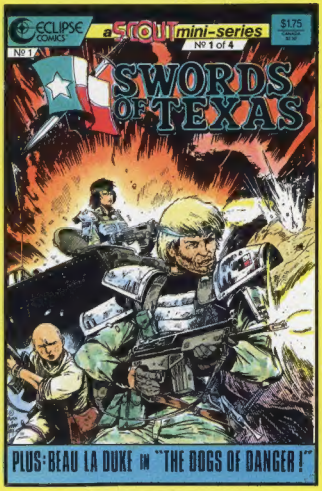

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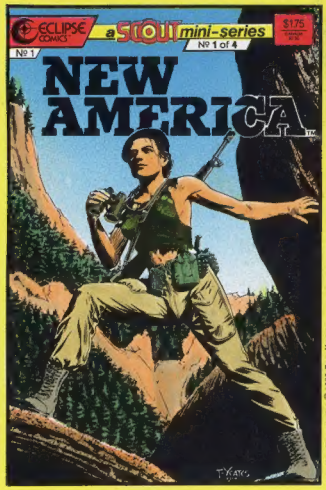

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